11 May 1974

Dear Harold:

Apologies for the long delay in answering your letters, rangingfrom Apr. 29 through May 7. It is partly because there is not much more I have to say, and partly because we have been tied up in a most necessary consolidation project with our files, one we had found it necessary to put off at various times because of new emergencies and crush situations which rolled in upon us during the past year. We are still not out of the woods, but at least things are under better control, and we hope to have them still better in hand by the time the public sessions of the judiciary committee get under way.

I really cannot answer the specific questions you put about your book except in a few instances. In general I feel very strongly, regardless of the merits of your case or of its presentation, these will have little bearing on the way it is received. I believe your basic trouble is that you are challenging something very deep-seated and suppressed in the American consciousness, the knowledge that the system is basically designed to preserve inequalities and privilege, that Nixon is simply the logical end result of such a system, and that he is no more guilty, basically, than any good red-blooded American. To face this is to admit that there has to be a better system, but this is not going to be admitted by most people because it would mean giving up whatever special status or advantage each thinks he or she enjoys under the system. It would mean admitting that the real meaning of socialism, brotherhood, might actually have some validity, but no one is going to admit this if it means he is going to have to share with others instead of having the right to exploit their weaknesses. You are a threat to the status quo, in a word, and any book you write will, exeept under the most unusual circumstances, be greeted accordingly. This does not mean it is not worthwhile; it just means it can expect nothing but trouble in getting off the ground, and, in the event it does get off the ground, getting shot down by any means available.

I think this is true under present circumstances, and believe it will become still truer as things get worse. This is a strong country, but its healthy elements are being dragged down by those that are unhealthy or moribund. Nothing is being doen to control inflation, partly because it is a world-wide problem which cannot be attacked piecemeal in one country alone, even the strongest, and partly because no on seems to realize how seriously and steadily the situation is degenerating. The rise in the prime rate, and the shakes that afflict the stock market, both are mere symptoms of deeper ills which no one is prepared to make the necessary economic or political sacrifices to correct. So, inflation will get worse, our money will be further devalued, robbing us of our savings and making even more worthless what we can earn, and we face economic stagnation and near-paralysis. It probably would have come before this if it hadn't been for our industrial and marketing momentum, but this momentum is slowing and the day of reckoning now appears inevitable.

Economic chaos means, in the end, political chaos, and the always-present tendency to look for easy and simple answers is bound to grow as things get worse. Thus, as Nixon stalls, he gets ever nearer to the time when some simple way out can find buyers who ordinarily wouldn't touch it. For instance, for some time I have felt that there was less danger of the military going along with him simply because he looked more and more like a loser, and these types don't knowingly adhere to losers. But if there are food riots and other civil disturbances the picture could change, and I'm enclosing a piece by

Stuart Loory in the NY Times which suggests the idea is not unique. There can be no question that with more and more confusion the chances of a takeover improve. Confusion we are going to have, in unprecedented amounts and degrees. I regard the Paracel Islands incident as a dry run sample of our next Gulf of Tonkin incident. It could just as well happen in Cambodia, Thailand, Mozambique, the Middle East. Anytime it's needed, a national emergency can be created, executive emergency powers which have been accumulating since FDR days can be invoked, the military can be ordered out, and that's it.

So instead of the chances for your book improving in the near future, they seem to me to be more likely to decrease. Again, this has nothing to do with the merits of the situation. It just reflects the situation and what it can become.

That isn't much help, but in spite of much healthy reaction to the WH transcripts, I sense a great danger that the impeachment process is going to be perverted into a relatively easy way out for the people, who have only themselves to blame for Nixon. Making him the scapegoat for all that ails us is not going to be facing the truth, and I'm not sure we are capable of facing it. Your book would help, but it seeks to accomplish something heretofore never done -- getting us to look at ourselves as we really are.

A couple of minor points in your long letter of 5/2/74. We much prefer no credit in regard to the Hunt-Buckley thing, which should go to Lesar anyway. We'd prefer to be left out entirely; identifying us would add nothing -- you can write around it -- and not identifying us could not detract from what you have to say. Thanks for understanding our wish in this.

We agree with you that statistically the chances of making a mistake (probably it most likly would be simply being misled in some detail where you were supposed to be misled) certainly have grown larger. We can suggest no remedy except your usual thorough methods, and checking where possible with some sharp legal mind like Lesar's.

Title: How about simply "The Unimpeachment." ?

Your miseries: We both feel that despite what your doctor says, they must be psychosomatic to some extent if only because of the enormous frustrations under which you try to function. There comes a time when a person who knows what can and should be done finally has to be affected somewhat, in some way, by the inability to act on his convictions.

Mr. Maio (his spelling): There is a word in Chinese, miao, which means temple, but which I cannot ever having heard used as a surname. The common name is Mao, as in Mao Tze-tung (Mao means hair), and I suspect Mr. Maio long ago just gave up because foreigners persisted in pronouncing his name Mayo and spelled it accordingly, Maio. Ask him to pronounce it for you. If it comes out sounding like mow as in hay-mow, it's almost certainly Mao.

Best,

Jim

jdw